

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 21, 2007

The Honorable George W. Bush
The President
The White House
Washington DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are deeply concerned about human rights conditions in Vietnam and the planned visit of President Triet to the White House troubles us greatly. We believe the government of Vietnam must understand the consequences of the mistreatment of its citizens. To that end, we write today to strongly urge you to re-designate Vietnam as a "country of particular concern" (CPC) under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998. Such action will send an appropriate diplomatic message that the U.S.-Vietnam relationship is harmed by the arrests, restrictions, and harassment of religious freedom, human rights, and democracy advocates such as Father Nguyen Van Ly, Nguyen Van Dai, Vo Van Thanh Liem, Tran Van Hoa, Thich Huyen Quang and Thich Quang Do.

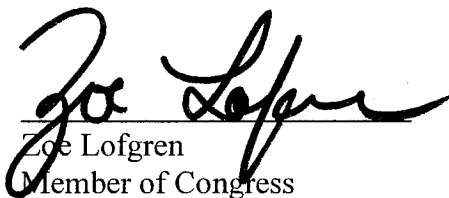
Over the past several months, as you noted in your Prague speech, Vietnam has arrested dozens of "religious and political dissidents." In addition, according to the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), over the past year there have been additional short-term detentions, harassment, and other restrictions on religious communities in Vietnam, targeting ethnic minority Protestants, Khmer Buddhists, Hoa Hao Buddhists, and the leaders of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam. The Vietnamese government seeks to control the growth and activities of religious groups and to arrest religious leaders suspected of challenging the communist party's political monopoly.

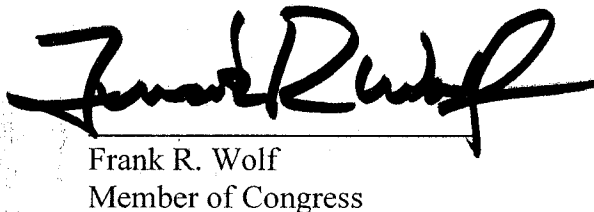
We believe the recent arrests and imprisonment of Father Nguyen Van Ly, Nguyen Van Dai, and Li Thi Cong Nhan are important cases in considering whether to re-designate Vietnam as a CPC. Both Father Ly and Nguyen Van Dai were convicted and jailed for "propagandizing against the state" and for "collecting evidence of Vietnam's religious persecution" to send to "enemy powers and overseas reactionaries" including the National Endowment for Democracy. Religious leaders and religiously motivated advocates have become prominent voices in Vietnam's dissident community. They founded free speech, democracy, and human rights organizations in order to ensure religious freedom advances for the long term. They believe that legal and political reforms are needed to fully protect the human rights of Vietnam citizens against the arbitrary power of the Vietnamese government.

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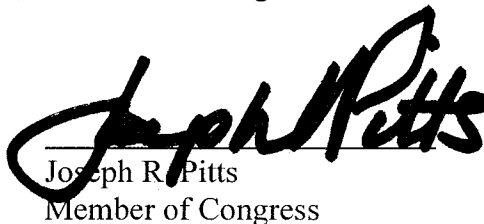
We believe re-designation of Vietnam will send a clear message that U.S. interests in Vietnam are not solely encompassed by trade. In addition, we believe the CPC designation provides the State Department with a range of diplomatic options and incentives that may be used as the current crackdown on religious and political dissidents continues.

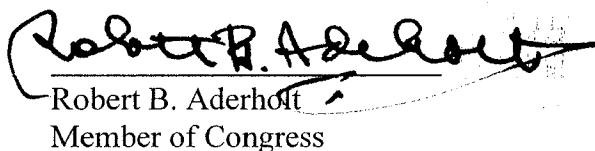
Sincerely,

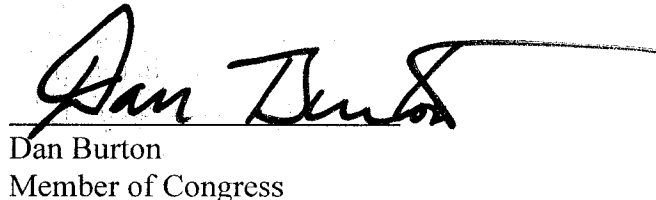

Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress


Frank R. Wolf
Member of Congress

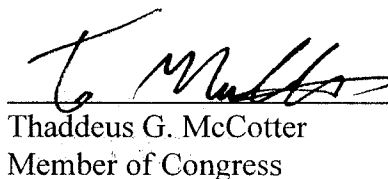

Loretta Sanchez
Member of Congress


Joseph R. Pitts
Member of Congress

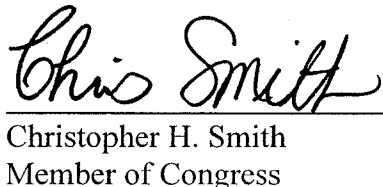

Robert B. Aderholt
Member of Congress


Dan Burton
Member of Congress


Luis V. Gutierrez
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Thaddeus G. McCotter
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Janice D. Schakowsky
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